

Narrative Writing

Qualities of Good Narrative Writing:

1. The story is relatable to the reader
2. The characters are relatable to the reader
3. The lead pulls the reader in, the reader is engaged throughout, and the ending leaves the reader satisfied (or wanting more)
4. The reader can envision the characters, setting, and events in the story
5. The story is believable
6. The story has a predictable format that the reader can follow
7. The writer's purpose for writing the story (theme/message) is clear

How Can We Lift the Level of Narrative Writing in our Classroom:

- Make the writing more significant- "What do I want to really show in my story?"
- Using mentor texts- How do authors we know create texts that matter?

Goals When Writing Narratives:

- Write about something small with BIG meaning
- Write for the reader- pull them in and keep them engaged from start to finish (great place to use writing partners)
- Write with strong feeling (importance), but show, NOT tell, these feelings
- Narratives are small moments (scenes) strung together with a common thread (theme)

Strategies to Generate Ideas for Narrative Writing:

- Think of a person, place or object that has special meaning to you. Make a list of small moment memories you have of that person, place, or thing. Choose the one small moment that is the most important to you and write that small moment in your notebook.
- Make a list of important times in your life (first times, last times, or times when you learned something important). Choose one small moment that is the most important to you and write that small moment in your notebook.
- Make a list of times when you felt a strong feeling (worry, embarrassment, hope, fear, disappointment). Write a small moment story about one of the experiences that caused you to feel this feeling.

When students are writing fictional narratives, teach that writers get ideas for fictional stories by basing them on real life stories (personal narratives). Writers can reread their own entries to look for ideas that could be turned into fiction.

Strategies to Generate Ideas for Fictional Narrative Writing:

- Reread the entries in your notebook. Create a character that deals with a situation that you have dealt with in your own life.
- Think of stories you wish existed in the world and haven't been able to find. Create a character that could deal with a problem in this story.
- Create a character that deals with an issue that is important to you.

When selecting a seed idea, writers should answer the following questions in their notebook:

- What do I want to tell in this story?
- How am I going to show this in my story?
- Why is this story important for me to write?
- What can the reader learn from me writing this story?

Before students begin drafting, review the revision strategies they have already learned from writing personal narratives. They should be held accountable for using these strategies when writing narratives.

- Stretching out the most important part
- Alternating between dialogue, internal thinking and action
- Paragraphing to help convey meaning

As students plan and begin to draft, it is important to teach them:

- Determining perspective (point of view). -Who is going to tell the story?
- Using leads to set the stage- introduce setting and main character (and their motivations)
- Using endings to resolve the problem in the story
- ***An easier structure to help students plan out their story is "Somebody wanted..., but then..., and so, finally..."

Revision Strategies:

- Bring out (developing) the internal story (motivations, internal conflict)
- Writing Scenes:
 - Adding setting to a scene to help the reader envision
 - Scenes are based on action
 - Show what's happening in the scene (don't tell)
- Using scenes to develop the problem in the story (how do these moments make the problem bigger/add an additional problem)?
- Moving forwards or backwards in time (add scenes (small moments) from the past and the future)
- Develop the turning point/climax (slowing down the "hot spot")
- Revising by Removing- All parts of our story should help get the meaning across. Teach students to cut out parts that don't fit or rewrite parts so they do fit
- Using dialogue to show character relationships, conflicts, or a character's motivations or feelings
- Creating Character with Four Boxes:
 - Box 1. Physical Description
 - Box 2. Gesture Description
 - Box 3. Inner Monologue (what the character is thinking, feeling, experiencing)
 - Box 4. Describe the Character from Another Character's Perspective

Analyzing Narrative Writing

Student Writer	What is the BIG meaning the writer is trying to convey?	How does the writer keep you engaged from the beginning to the end?	How does the writer SHOW, not tell, their feelings?	How does the writer string together small moments to develop the narrative?	Based on the previous questions, what do we need to teach this writer about narratives to lift the level of their writing?
A					
B					
C					

On a bitter winter afternoon, Eugene, an eleven-year-old boy, was walking home from school, clutching his report card, and holding it close to his chest. He was worried about his grades for he knew he had done worse than last year in fifth grade. He just thought it was too hard for him to keep up with the things his other classmates were learning.

As soon as Eugene was home he found his parents busy preparing dinner. Eugene briefly said Hi to them, and quickly put the report card on the table and left for his room upstairs.

About an hour latter, his mom called him down for dinner. Eugene's mom had cooked his favorite meal of roasted chicken, rice, string beans, and baked macaroni and cheese. Somehow, Eugene was too anxious that he couldn't enjoy the food his mother made. Eugene just ate a small portion of his food, and walked away from the table he went straight back to his room. Soon Eugene started playing his favorite song on his electric bass guitar to keep his mind off his report card. Mean while, his parents were discussing his grades. His parents talked until late night and called him over to talk about his grades.

"Well Eugene" his mother began, "What happened? Why did your grades drop so much from last year?"

"Mom, it's a new school, and I did not expect so much homework, projects and other things. It is a good school, I have learned a lot, but I just think it is too hard for me to catch up to, it's too advanced, " Eugene said truthfully.

"I understand sweetie, is there any thing we could do to help? Do you think a tutor will be of help?"

"Many of my classmates have tutors so, yes I think it will help me as well."

"That sounds good so I will look into it and tell you as soon as possible."

"Thanks Mom, I will ask my classmates about their tutors as well," Eugene said feeling relieved.

It didn't take long to find a tutor; soon Eugene started to take classes on every Tuesday from a tutor named Josh.

One day at school Eugene saw his classmate Trent talking about a band he played in and how they needed an electric bass guitar in their band.

Immediately Eugene ran up to Trent for the spot then Trent told Eugene:

"Auditions are today at the old warehouse okay?"

"Okay" Eugene said back excitedly

After school ended Eugene ran back home to get his guitar. He then sprinted right to the old warehouse, right in time for his turn. He then played *Boulevard of Broken Dreams*. After the song ended the band agreed that Eugene had done the best and, so Trent said, " the band agrees that, you get the spot, and here is the music."

Eugene ran home with a grim smile on his face. He had made the band! He couldn't wait to tell his mother about the news. Eugene burst through the door and immediately said: "Mom, dad, I made it to a friend's rock band!" he could see his mother's jolly look on her face, while she sat down, his father hugged him with delight.

Eugene could tell his parents were proud of him. Soon Eugene realized that it was time to go to his tutoring class.

When the class had ended he kept on thinking about Josh. He loved the way Josh explained things to him; everything seemed to be easier. He just couldn't wait until next week. When Eugene had gotten home he quickly reviewed the things his tutor reviewed with him and in

an hour his mother called him down for dinner. At the table his mother asked him how the class was, Eugene said, "the class was great."

Right after dinner Eugene ran straight to his room to check his e-mail. Once he logged in he found an e-mail from Trent saying that the first performance was next week on Tuesday.

The day before the performance, Eugene called Josh to ask if it was possible to change his class to a different day, the answer was yes. He was very happy.

The next day Eugene woke up like there were butterflies in his stomach. He was excited for the very first performance. The performance was a success. Many friends and classmates came and enjoyed the music. Eugene's parents were waiting back stage to congratulate him.

It has been a long time since Eugene felt happy and confident. He was finally back on track with his studies. The next time Eugene got his report card, his grades went up by a lot.

Facing a Fear

“Huff...huff... huff...huff,” Kaiko panted as she was running to the beach for first period. She had lived in Hawaii since she was born. Since it was the first day of 6th grade she would be learning marine biology for the very first time. Marine biology would be starting in any second, but Kaiko was still around ten blocks away. Luckily Kaiko was a good runner so she would be able to get there faster.

Kaiko finally got there. The whole class was circled around a whale. She rushed over to see what the commotion was about. The whale was rolling from side to side. “Lets push it back in,” Said a voice.

“Its to heavy dumb head,” Said another.

“What should we do?” asked Nani, Kaiko’s best friend.

“What is all this commotion about?” Came the shrill voice of Mrs. Rokabouka the principal of balia water middle school.

“There is a dying whale. What should we do?”

“Oh my god some one go get the life guard!” Mrs. rokabouka replied.

The lifeguard came running over

“Nani came and told me about the whale. Lets push it back in.”, Said the life guard

Kaiko backed away. She hated getting wet. She did not mind pool but she hated the ocean.

Every one started to push the whale in the water except for kaiko. She sat under a small coconut palm, still covered in blossoms, rosy and pink petals with a golden pistil. She stared at the beach from the shady spot. “Such a wonderful place,” She whispered. A humming bird zipped past her. It dove, slicing through the air like a jet plane. First period was not even close to being over. Kaiko ran over to the group

“Many people don’t understand marine biology. All they think it is is playing with fish,”

Kaiko got so absorbed in her thoughts she could not listen to Mrs. Rokabouka, (marine biology sounds great! I want to be one.)

“Kaiko! Are you listening?” screamed Mrs. Rokabouka.

“Yes Mrs. Rokabouka,” She answered still shaking from Mrs. Rokabouka’s booming scream.

“Well marine biology is learning,” She paused

“What if you are afraid of water?” Kaiko asked

“Don’t be one,” Mrs. Rokabouka replied.

Kaiko groaned. A wide frown spread over her long face.

“Darn it,” These words echoed through her head.

“Darn it.”

After school Kaiko headed to the beach. Kaiko was still thinking about marine biology.

“Hey,” Kaiko responded

“What’s the matter Kaiko?”

“Nothing,” Kaiko responded

“Something’s the matter I know it.” Nani tried to use her sweetest voice possible.

“Leave me alone.” Kaiko yelled using a harsh voice and ran away from Nani.

“I was just trying to help!” She yelled to Kaiko.

“No you were not!” Kaiko yelled back. Nani gave up her protest.

“I guess she did have a bad day.” Nani smiled. “I knew it.”

Kaiko finally stopped. She was exhausted

“Hi.” Said a voice. “I heard you shouting.”

“What! Who are you?” kaiko said

“I’m Hie.” Said the voice.

“I’m Kaiko.” Said Kaiko

“What happened?” said Hie

"I want to be a marine biologist, but I am to afraid to get in the water." Kaiko said quietly

"Just try getting in.," suggested Hie.

"I'm to scared." Protested Kaiko

"Just try. I used to be afraid of rock climbing. One day I decided to try it and I wasn't afraid. Try that with your problem. It will work trust me."

"Fine." Kaiko had to, he was right.

Kaiko trudged over to the ocean. Luckily she wore her bathing suit. She put a toe in the water for less than a second and took it out faster than lightning could ever travel.

"I'm to scared, I can't do it!" Kaiko yelled to Hie

"I'll come with you." Hie insisted

"Fine." Kaiko replied.

Hie walked up beside Kaiko and took a step in

"Nothing happened." Hie said. "Your turn."

Kaiko took a step in. nothing happened. She took another. Nothing happened. She took another, then another, then another. Soon she had gone neck deep. Nothing happened

"I did it! Now I can become a marine biologist.
Thank you Hie. Thank you."

"No problem. Any time." Said Hie.

Kaiko ran to the shady where the jet like humming
bird dove, slicing through air, she lay down thinking of
happy thoughts and soon the sounds around her
lulled her to sleep.

Jenny

Right before Jenny's father got to the door, 7 year old Jenny yelled, why do you have to go to war? You might get killed! Then after her father leaves Jenny says in her head, I'm with mom for three years and I have no dad. Her face turned red it looked like it was going to explode. Jenny stomped up the stairs to her room to get ready for school. She stomped down the stairs to go to the dining room to eat breakfast, Jenny's mom made blueberry pancakes, but Jenny just played with her pancakes. Jenny's mom said in a loud voice, "STOP THAT AND EAT UP YOUR PANCAKES YOUR GOING TO BE LATE FOR SCHOOL!"

At school that day when Jenny got to school she slammed the classroom door. Jenny's teacher said, "Good morning Jenny." Jenny whispered, "Hello Mrs. Goodworth". Jenny's eye's were getting watery. In Jenny's head she said what if someone sees my eyes watery they would tease me of crying It was true a boy named Max saw her and teased when the teacher was not looking he said, cry baby, wet face! Jenny got so mad she wanted to go home. She ran out the classroom door as quick as she could and she went to the main office of P.S. 110 and went she got there. She yelled to Mrs.Pear, "I hate this school I want to leave!" Mrs.Pear said in a soft, "why would you do that Jenny ?" Jenny replied back, "Because everyone is making fun of me, because I am crying alot."

Mrs. Pear said, "May I ask why you are crying alot?"

Jenny said, "You may, because my father had gone to war today."

Well I have to go to class now, bye Mrs.Pear

"Bye Jenny", Said Mrs.Pear

Jenny got to the classroom Jenny shut the door silently so they would not hear Jenny coming into the classroom door:

Mrs.Goodworth yelled, "WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN JENNY!"

The whole class looked at Jenny in a bad way. Jenny said in a soft mouse voice,

"Sorry, I just wanted to go home."

Mrs.Goodworth said, "Ok, kids take out your planners."

10 minutes passed the school bell rang, Ring, Ring, Ring!

Mrs.Goodworth said, "Bye class, Jenny stay here. I have to call your mother to tell her what you did today".

Jenny's hand started to get sweaty and itchy. But only the answering machine answered.

"Please say something after the beep, Beep !" Jenny felt better than bad. Then she remembered she had to go on the school bus today. Jenny said goodbye to

Mrs.Goodworth and she started running as fast as she could to catch her bus. She got just on time to the bus!

When she got home her mom was in the bathroom so Jenny erased the message on the machine. Then Jenny's mom comes from the bathroom and asked

"How was school today?"

"It was good", said Jenny, with her hand getting all sweaty and itchy.

" I got a letter from your Dad " Jenny's mom said.

"REALLY?!" said Jenny.

"YES" said her mom.

"OPEN IT, OPEN IT!", said Jenny.

The letter said:

Dear Jenny,

I will be coming home in one year instead of three years.

Love,

Your Father.

Jenny was so excited to hear the news.

"Well I have to do my homework now" , Jenny said.

Jenny ran up the stairs and went to her room took out her homework, it was multiplications. So she jumped on her bed because she was happy that her father was coming home in one year instead of three, while repeating her times table.

" I can't believe tomorrow is the last day of school!" Then Jenny said,

"Next year I will be in the third grade!"

Yawn Jenny was getting pretty tired. Then Jenny's mom yells from downstairs,

"You have to go to bed now Jenny!"

"Ok Mom" then Jenny went to sleep.

RING, RING, RING ! It was 8:00 o'clock, Jenny over slept !

"JENNY WAKE UP YOUR LATE FOR SCHOOL !" Jenny's mom yelled.

"Ha what ?" Jenny said waking up

She quickly took a shower and put some clothes. She ran down the stairs and ate breakfast on the school bus.

This time she came to school with a smile. But nobody and I mean nobody smiled at her. When she got to class she said good morning to Mrs. Goodworth then she went to her seat. She was at it going every time the teacher asked a question, Jenny's hand went up, but one part of Jenny was worried about report cards. Another thing she was worried about was if her Dad was going to be in time for Jenny's 8th birthday. On July 4th, the same day when America got its independence from Britain. She was not paying attention to the teacher when asked when is your birthday Jenny?

Jenny had her hand on her face and she was looking at the table.

Jenny answered, "What?, oh sorry July 4th."

Ok class I just wanted you to know that anyone whose birthday is in the summer we will be having a party for the whole class.

Everyone started to say to one another cool, great, this is the best day ever.

Jenny said, "I wish my Dad was here"

Then the end of school came.

As always she had to take the school bus home, when she got home she looked at the calendar. It was June then July came it was July 1st. Jenny was so happy because it was three more days until her birthday, and Jenny's father was coming home from war soon.

Jenny said, "Today is going to be a busy day." It was going to be a busy day, because she needed to plan her birthday party. She first made a list of people she wanted to invite and just only the girls was 15. Then when Jenny showed her mom the list she was about to faint! Then they went shopping to buy the stuff they needed for the party. When Jenny got home she dropped on the floor and said, "I shopped til I dropped."

Three days passed, it was Jenny's birthday. She ran down the stairs and she yelled "I'm 8 years old!"

She was so excited for her birthday party. But Jenny's mom was asleep and Jenny ate breakfast and she did not spill any milk or cereal, because her Mom was sleeping Jenny wanted to know what her mom got her for her birthday. So she went to every closet in the house and didn't find any wrapped boxes. So she goes up the stairs slowly. Then Jenny's mom said, "Do you want breakfast?"

Jenny said, "Oh no"

Jenny's mom ran down the stairs to the kitchen and the table was clean, Then Jenny's mom looked at the clock it was 12:00 O 'Clock it was lunchtime and almost time for Jenny's birthday party. They had to change quick.

Two hours passed , people started to come to the party. When they ate pizza the kids started to play and then the cake came, with eight candles. Then they sang "Happy Birthday". Then Jenny wished her dad would come back in time for her part and she blew out the candles. Then 30 minutes passed and her dad did not appear and an hour passed, nothing happened. Thirty more minutes passed when she was going to give up. A man with dirt on his face and on his uniform said "Happy Birthday Jenny!"

Then Jenny ran and hugged her father tightly. She did not care if he was dirty she would get dirt on him. Then he said, "WE WON THE WAR!" Then joy filled up the whole room and Jenny said, This is the best birthday ever!